

FREEDOM

WINTER 2016/17

ANARCHIST JOURNAL

FREE/DONATION

STUDENT RENT STRIKES HAVE WON BEFORE – AND CAN AGAIN

DONT PAY.
WIN THE DAY



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PLUS THE FREEDOM PRESS ANNUAL REPORT

STUDENTS ARE SUFFERING AND RENT STRIKES ARE THE SOLUTION



If you thought that the student mental health “crisis” was something of an exaggeration, let us start off with some fun statistics. According to recent research by the National Union of Students, 78% of students have experienced mental health problems in the last year. Around half of those who have experienced problems with mental health said they have difficulty completing daily tasks.

Overall, the number of students in need of mental health support is rising sharply. On average, universities in the UK provide one counsellor for every 300 students that seek help from student mental health services — bearing in mind that around a third of students do not know where to get mental health support at their university, this figure is staggeringly, distressingly low.

When ex-student activists bemoan the lack of a 2010-style student uprising, complete with Millbank-bashing and mass demos, I think of the thousands nationwide who are struggling to keep on top of their studies while working at minimum-wage jobs, unable to access mental health services and feeling suffocated under the looming weight of tens of thousands of pounds of debt. Is it surprising that students aren’t going to meetings and occupying their universities, when there is no time, no money or no energy left?

Universities are failing at two of their core duties; they are not providing accessible higher education, and they

are not caring for their students’ welfare. Of course, these are not actually the aims of a university. Universities are the tools of an oppressive society. They are fundamentally classist, racist, sexist, and ableist institutions. Increasingly, they exist solely to make a profit.

Students appear toothless when facing these aggressive, ruthlessly capitalist institutions. If we can’t organise long occupations and rallies, what hope is there for change? Mass student strikes, such as in Quebec, are unlikely to happen when university degrees are now goods that students are paying for — after all, what sense is there in striking when a student strike means essentially throwing money into the bottomless cesspit of greedy university management?

Rent strikes are the answer. Becoming a rent striker is the easiest form of protest action: through the simple act of not paying your rent, you become a part of a movement with real power.

Rent strikes challenge universities in two ways. Firstly, and obviously, they call attention to the social responsibility of universities by stating that high rents in student accommodation are essentially a secondary tuition fee, making it impossible for an increasing number of young people to go to university.

Secondly, and maybe less obviously, rent strikes have the potential to build a new kind of social life on campus — a

community within a community, a solidarity network. Rent striking students should use the community of strikers as an opportunity for something more: by organising in flats, corridors and halls we can begin to care for each other. We can cook together to alleviate pressures of money and time and start food co-ops on campus. We can start support groups for those stuck eternally waiting to see a therapist.

We can reclaim the spaces we live and study in — if we can’t stage elaborate campus occupations, why not occupy our own halls, where we can occupy while at home? We can hang banners from windows, paint our corridors and create communities in the places that were designed for us to lead isolated lives in our small rooms.

If the rent strike movement spreads nationwide, to universities from Sussex to Stirling, I hope it can do more than offer students a chance to take direct action related to accessibility of education and cost of living. I hope it can transform our everyday lives and help us alleviate each other’s struggles. We need to emphasise the importance of taking seriously the crises facing students — and we need to respond to these crises in our own terms. We need to liberate ourselves to live a life worth living. We need to do this now.

Iida Käyhkö
UCL Cut The Rent

For people interested in this sort of thing, the main typefaces are Langdon, Alfa Slab One and Centabel Book. Dingbat symbols are taken from 1910 issues of Emma Goldman’s Mother Earth magazine.
Kindly printed by Aldgate Press



Pic: Ron F, Flickr



ALL FOR THE SISTERHOOD

This summer Sisters Uncut opened up an empty flat on an estate in East London as part of their ongoing campaign against cuts in domestic violence services. The flat stayed open for months and was full of activity and people, and the action resulted in some serious changes to Hackney official policy — not least getting a kid's playground reopened.

Sisters Uncut started in response to massive cuts to women's refuges and other crucial services which have happened during a rise in domestic violence and this has led to an increase in deaths due to domestic violence for the first time in decades.

In Hackney they have been campaigning about housing policy including stopping the loss of social housing and people in desperate circumstances being turned away by the council, and calling for more

empty flats to be used for temporary accommodation. This summer they made that call a reality for one flat in Marian Court in the E9 area.

As soon as the flat was opened up the group made a massive effort to reach out and connect with people in the block and the surrounding estates. One of the first activities was a kids' breakfast club, providing free food and a cup of tea and a chat.

The flat was on a block which had many empty flats and was being used to house families on a short-term basis and many of them got involved in the activities. When the weather was hot the kids made a demand for a paddling pool and soon the lawn outside the flat was the scene for a lot of splashing.

The action worked due to a big effort to reach out and talk to people, to make

the flat comfortable and welcoming and simultaneously pushing for concrete changes to local policy through lively direct actions. The campaign tied together many Issues that are having a serious impact on people including loss of social housing, homelessness, domestic violence, racism and worsening conditions for children in poor areas.

The campaign also worked because it was very serious and at the same time really good fun. Families were constantly in and out of the flat and felt welcomed and they were on the demos joining in. Kids from the block looked like they were having the time of their lives.

Sisters Uncut currently have groups in north, east and south east London, Portsmouth, Doncaster, Bristol and Newcastle. Find out more at www.sistersuncut.org.



FRACK THE SYSTEM: UK

With the fracking industry poised to attempt its largest assault on communities across the country to date, and what would be its most significant advance in this country since 2011 if not resisted, it seems an appropriate time to take a look back at what has led to this threat we are facing and examine what we are fighting for.

The Fracking Threat

The last decade has seen an explosion in unconventional oil and gas (fracking) drilling as easy to extract hydrocarbons have become harder to find. The system has been forced to resort to new and increasingly more aggressive extraction techniques. While oil prices are currently well below their 2008 peak, and new drilling has stalled in many places, this hasn't stopped preparations for continued expansion once prices rise. Places where fracking has broken out of its US/Canada/Australia incubation zones include Argentina's Vaca Muerta ("Dead Cow") Shale where 400 wells have been drilled so far and Essar Energy's Raniganj Project in West Bengal where almost 300 coalbed methane (CBM) wells have been drilled to date. While small compared to the hundreds of thousands of wells which have been drilled in the US, tens of thousands in Canada and over 7,500 in Australia, this could be just a foretaste of millions of wells coating large swaths of the globe, if not stopped.

The impacts of these wells, often drilled at densities of eight wells per square mile or more over large areas, on local communities has been extensively documented (from air and water pollution to spills and explosions). What has received far less attention is the systemic impact of these new, more expensive, energy sources on our societies as a whole. Fracking wells are expensive (and produce much less oil/gas per well), with a one shale well in the US often costing in the region of \$10 million. Multiplied by the hundreds of thousands of wells drilled to date this add up to a rather hefty pile of cash (measured in trillions of dollars) and it is unsurprising that energy prices have needed to rise. We are now learning, from

Goldman Sachs, that the fracking "boom" has driven oil and gas investment returns to 50 year lows (not that someone hasn't been profiting somewhere), confirming the perceptions of a pyramid scheme driven by investment hype.

Extreme Energy-Austerity

The interaction between the global economic system and the fossil fuel extraction industry which fuels it is highly complex in its details, but simple in its essentials. It takes energy to extract energy and so some fraction of the energy produced by the fossil fuel industry needs to be fed back to power further extraction, rather than be used by the rest of society. In the past that fraction was small, a few percent or less, and could be easily ignored, though it was constantly growing as easier to extract energy sources were depleted, and slightly harder to extract ones replaced them. A slow, incremental increase. The peaking of conventional oil production in the last decade or so has changed all this, with extraction effort exploding as new, more intense chapter of fossil fuel exploitation has got underway.

Fracking and other extreme energy extraction methods, such as tar sands, deep water & arctic drilling etc. are not just poisoning communities and polluting whole ecosystems but reshaping the very fabric of our societies. When mediated through the mechanisms of globalised capitalism, and its associated markets, these changes are in no way confined to the areas where fracking is actually taking place. As a greater and greater portion of the global economy must be devoted to fossil fuel extraction, the resources available for other activities must be proportionately reduced.

The fossil fuel extraction industry has grown from under 4% to over 11% of the global economy in a short number of years, which has necessitated massive redistribution of resources. While much of this redistribute has been market based, through the mechanism of rising energy prices, this has been followed up by more deliberate, state focused re-allocations (austerity).

Of course in any such economic re-alignment there will be winners and losers, and as you would expect large energy related corporations, and their sub-contractors, have generally been the main winners. While the system is already well adapted to make sure that those lowest down the pecking order feel the brunt of such changes, the last five years have been dominated by efforts to insulate corporate capitalism from these changes, and displace even more of the burden onto ordinary people.

In this respect the pervasive effects of fracking, its economics ones, have already crossed the Atlantic. Mediated by globalised energy markets the costs of fracking, and other extreme energy extraction like tar sands, are already being born by people in this country. It is far from coincidental that the two major new political issues of our time, fracking and austerity, emerged at the same time.

Dominant issue for the 21st Century

This brings us to the heart of the matter, fracking is not just another environmental issue, but a key symptom of Extreme Energy, the complex interplay between the inevitable resource exhaustion caused by the voracious global economic system and the system's increasingly desperate responses to that depletion.

This is a process, like "climate change", which is only set to grow in importance, and seems likely to dominate every aspect of the 21st century. As easier to extract fossil fuels are used up, and that is happening at a frightening rate, only harder to extract ones remain to take their place. Absent massive cuts in energy usage, this is a process that can only go in one direction. And there are even more costly and damaging extraction techniques being lined up behind the current crop, fracking, tar sands etc., such as underground coal gasification, oil shale (not to be confused with shale oil) and methane hydrates.

While climate change is portrayed as the issue to end all issues, the reality somewhat more complex. The cumulative effects of carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere are constantly growing, but it

HYDROCARBON THREAT

is entirely unclear when, and if, changes to the global climate will dominate over the socio-economic and local environmental effects of fossil fuels. While half a million people a year are being killed by climate change, 5 million are killed directly by fossil fuel pollution and many millions more by the intensifying wars to control these dwindling resources. The climate change fatalities will grow but at present other impacts are growing much faster. Ironically we are now in a position where we have a serious fight on our hands, even to get to the point where climate change is our greatest problem.

The disproportionate focus on climate seems to stem for is a “safe,” distant, abstract threat, a worry that requires no immediate action. Fracking on the other hand changes all that. Not only does it bring the threat of immediate impacts to doorsteps of anyone within a licensed area, it also crosses all class boundaries, pitting local communities, rich or poor, against the fossil fuel industry. Even the perceived rural/urban divide is illusory, with fracking sites creeping into Texan cities. Once the economic impacts of fracking are factored in fracking is a threat to everyone, save perhaps the most privileged.

Fracking Resistance

Fighting fracking isn't about begging the political classes, who arguably don't have the power if they had the will, to bite the hand that feeds them and start dismantling the current system. Instead it is about getting in front of the leading edge of fossil fuel exploitation and standing in the way of global capitalism expanding its use of fossil fuels. Shutting down established institutions is always going to be much harder than stopping something new from starting, but if those institutions are part of a system which also require these new changes, then the game has changed.

In the new normal we now inhabit it is no longer necessary to fight to change the status quo, because the continued existence of the system depends, not on business as usual, but constant, aggressive and radical change, be it new economic frontiers or the aggressive use of austerity.

Talk of banning fracking is like talk of banning capitalism or world trade, lots of hot air but the system must keep rolling on regardless, because it has no other choice. There are only two real sides in the fracking fight, pro-energy consumption and anti-energy consumption. But of course even this is only a transitory dichotomy, in the long run fossil fuels will be exhausted, human energy consumption will fall, massively, and with it the social constructs which have seen half the world's population move into cities over the last century.

The trans-national corporations, megacities, and neo-colonial empires which have been so constructed, have a major difference from anything which has preceded them. All these inhuman entities require fossil fuels in order to exist and will fight tooth and nail to maintain access to them. We are faced with a fight to the death, where there is no second place. Either we destroy the massive corporate entities which presently dominate our existence or they will they will drag us down.

Like the peoples of some earlier era's, such as those who resisted the industrial revolution, we are faced with a system which is trying to change itself, and us, fundamentally. Like them we will be ridiculed for standing in the way of such “progress”, but the hollow nature of such mythology becomes increasingly stark by the day. Unlike the past we have two clear advantages. Firstly the current system's need for change is much more desperately and delays more likely to unmask that desperation, if not completely destabilise it. Secondly present communications technology means the scope for coordinated local action across whole countries or even globally, to block or at least delay these these measures, seems far greater than it has ever been before. Wherever fracking companies want to drill there are threatened local communities who, with the right information, can be a thorn in the industry's side. A few thorns can be dealt with but thousands, or millions, is another story.

This is the greatest challenge humanity has ever faced, but while the stakes could not be higher, at least this time

real systemic change is inevitable. The capitalist-industrial system has been digging its own grave for a long time, the only question is whether these unavoidable changes can be steered in a positive direction. Building a broad based, but radical, decentralised resistance to the system's attempts to sustain itself a while longer is crucial. On the fracking front a good start has been made in resisting attempts to sustain the system a little longer, through an intensification of destructive energy extraction.

Current Fracking Frontlines

The present fracking situation in this country can best be described as a slow motion invasion, being fought on numerous fronts, most actively by threatened local communities, in a manner reminiscent of guerrilla warfare. Not that you will find many Kalashnikov toting partisans in the home-counties, or even Lancashire, but strategically, the modus operandi has many parallels. Fighting on numerous small fronts, the currently 250 plus local anti-fracking groups, have been delaying and ramping up the costs of fracking projects, wearing down the opposition and deterring the investment on which the industry relies. Not a single well has been hydraulically fractured since Cuadrilla's disastrous attempt at Preese Hall (where the well was damaged by an induced earthquake), and the number of vertical test wells (primarily to obtain core samples) have been vastly reduced from what was planned.

This is no reason to be complacent, the industry is in the process of lining up the most significant assault to date and the threat is spreading as more areas have been licensed. That said, the growing threat is mobilising more resistance every day and this community-based movement seems unlikely to be a flash in the pan (these communities have little choice but to stand and fight). While all licenced areas are under some threat, as well as many areas which are not licensed, there are definitely areas where the threat is more immediate than others. Overleaf are listed some of the most important frontlines in the fight against fracking. >>>

LANCASHIRE — Cuadrilla Resources (Shale Gas)

Frackers, Cuadrilla, has plans for two large appraisal sites in Lancashire as it attempts to overcome years of delays in its attempts to exploit the Bowland Shale. These are the largest proposed fracking sites in the UK to date, with four horizontal wells each, and would require two years of drilling and hydraulic fracturing, producing vast quantities of toxic and radioactive waste, needing in the region of 20,000 truck movements per site.

Last year Cuadrilla came up against enormous community opposition in Lancashire and its two flagship UK fracking projects were rejected by the County Council, a major blow to the industry as a whole. Now the company are appealing those decisions, with central government set to bypass the local communities and grant approval anytime now.

NORTH YORKSHIRE — Third Energy (Tight/Shale Gas)

In North Yorkshire, as in Lancashire, the Bowland Shale is the primary target, and companies are scrambling to try to exploit it.

Cuadrilla and INEOS have recently acquired licences in the area, but an existing licence holder Third Energy has a head start, with planning permission for a hydraulic fracturing test on its Kirby Misperton well obtained in May.

The company plans to initially target tight sandstone layers within the Bowland Shale (so called tight gas), but this unconventional extraction is very similar to shale gas, and a step on the way to exploiting the shale itself.

Legal challenges by residents seem set to delay any work until at least the end of November.

EAST MIDLANDS — IGas Energy (Shale Gas)

A major fracking push is also underway in North Nottinghamshire where IGas Energy (with the backing of Total SA) are threatening communities in Bassetlaw, with a planning application for a shale gas exploration site with two wells at Misson due to be decided in October and has submitted another application for one well on another site at Tinker Lane near Blyth. While IGas seem to be in increasing financial difficulty, and may or may not be in much of a position to act of any planning permission they obtain, the licences could easily be sold (along with the permission) or a new partner brought in to push the project forward.

SUSSEX/SURREY — UKOG etc. (Tight/Shale Oil)

The threat of tight (shale) oil extraction in the Weald in Sussex and Surrey is growing fast, with UK Oil & Gas Investments (UKOG) cheerleading it. A consortium of firms (including UKOG) is set to apply for permission for further flow testing of the Horse Hill well (including the Kimmeridge Clay shale layer) in Surrey soon.

Europa Oil & Gas also want to target the Kimmeridge Clay during drilling of their planned Holmwood-1 well at Leith Hill. UKOG have also just acquired the Broadford Bridge site in Sussex, which has planning permission for a well to be drilled. At an existing well at Brockham in Surrey there are also plans for a new side-track targeting the Kimmeridge Clay. exploitation of the Kimmeridge Clay would require thousands of wells to be drilled across the Weald Basin.

LICENSED AREAS — INEOS etc. (Seismic Surveys)

The long-delayed 14th licencing round has seen an additional 11,500 square miles of licences offered to fracking companies. In particular Fracking company INEOS Upstream is planning to carry out a seismic surveys across the its newly acquired licence areas and is targeting South Yorkshire, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire first, with Cheshire and North Yorkshire likely to follow.

INEOS has contracted Fisher German Priestner as their land agent to try to gain access to the land they need for the surveys. Fisher German has already begun contacting landowners, and has told councils that INEOS wants to begin the survey within a month (as of writing). Seismic surveys are a first step to obtain information needed to select test drilling sites and secure further investment.

NATIONWIDE — Before you breathe a sigh of relief that you aren't near a site, you might want to consider the support networks which enable it. Every well requires thousands of truck movements, which drive

out of a limited number of sites. Trucks may bring toxic frack sand or take away health-risking waste. Affected areas include Cheshire, Norfolk, Leeds, Middlesborough, Stoke-on-Trent and Northamptonshire.





SO WE'RE OUT OF EUROPE

In the months leading up to this year's referendum on the UK's continued membership of the European Union I observed lots of discussion — mainly on social media — between anarchists who intended on engaging with the ballot box for the first time in a long time, or in some cases, the first time ever. I couldn't understand why so many people were prepared to break ranks and participate in bourgeois democracy. I was told that "This one is different" and "We need the EU to protect us from the Tories."

Essentially, every argument I heard for voting in the referendum were the same arguments — albeit re-worded — that I have heard through all of my life for voting for the Labour Party. The idea that the EU is a benevolent bulwark that protects the working class against an unscrupulous right-wing domestic government is at best naive, and at worst, dishonest. The radical left-wing case for Brexit was subsequently smothered by claims that: "A vote to leave is a vote for the Tories" — the same vacuous bullshit that has been used by the zombie left any time someone has dared to look beyond the Labour Party.

Let us be clear what the EU actually is. It is a bosses' club. It was conceived as a bosses' club. It was created and expanded as a means for business to operate more effectively and to become a trading block to be able to compete (bully) other trading blocks and countries around the world: ie., if you want to sell coffee, tea etc in the EU, you will do it on our terms or you can forget it.

Any benefit to the working class, such as free movement, is merely a by-product of its primary role, which is to help business function more profitably.

The EU is a government the same as any other. The only real difference is that it is even more unwieldy, wasteful, bureaucratic and less democratic than most European national governments. How the pro-EU left can claim that it is democratic is beyond me. It patently isn't. They would have you believe that the EU is some kind of worker's paradise and that everything in the garden is rosy.

Attitudes towards the EU are deeply entrenched and have been developed over decades — not necessarily following party lines. While it was a yes or no choice, people had differing reasons for wanting to stay or to leave. Both sides of the debate told huge lies, and stoked up fears about our futures, but I suspect that most people who voted had already made their minds up before the campaign started. Yes, it is clear that the Leave Campaign's "The £350 million we send the EU could be spent on the NHS" claim was a huge whopper. That said, the vast majority of people who voted to leave did so on the strength of immigration issues — either outright bigots, or people who have swallowed the right-wing narrative and media distortion.

For anarchists the choice is the same as it has always been. Which set of bosses do you want? There really isn't any choice. They give you with one hand what they take away with the other. Yes, leaving the

EU may help the Tories erode conditions at work etc, but we can fight and win them back. Just as we always have. If there is racism on the rise then we will fight it as we always have done. My politics aren't about settling for second best. If they were I would join the Labour Party and be happy trying to polish the turd of capitalism.

I didn't vote in the EU referendum for the same reasons I don't vote in elections. That said, anything that erodes away bourgeois government and bureaucracy — at whatever level — can only be a good thing. Anarchists that smugly tell me that a vote for Brexit is a vote for the Tories should ask themselves why they didn't vote for Labour in the last general election? Surely by their logic, not voting is a vote for the Tories?

Some may claim that a referendum is different to an election as it brings decision making closer to the people — rather than in the hands of elected representatives (therefore anarchists should vote). However as we have seen since the referendum there are politicians demanding it be ignored, lobbying for a vote in parliament, and even calls for another referendum. So much for giving "choice" to the people.

Like anything, the devil is in the detail, and when the dust settles we may be better off or worse off. Either way, as an anarchist I will keep fighting, just as I always have done.

Matt Black



DEMOCRACY AND THE NHS



The mythology regarding the 1945-51 Labour governments dies hard on the left, particularly in the era of Jeremy Corbyn's Labour which often sees itself taking up the mantle of an older, less compromised, form of state socialism. The foundation of the welfare state and the National Health Service is a special touchstone, with both it and its founder, Nye Bevan, seen as the great examples of the British socialist tradition.

It's easy to see why socialists might cling to the NHS as an achievement. It provides something we all need, healthcare, as a right rather than a privilege, whilst sharing the costs across society and has consistently been rated as one of Britain's most popular institutions. In fact, in a poll conducted two years ago, 52% of people rated it the thing that made them "most proud to be British," five points above the armed forces.

If you've ever told a leftist that you don't vote because it never achieves anything, the NHS is one of the arguments you'll hear in defence of parliamentary socialism. But how much credit does the Labour Party deserve for implementing it? And how many of its flaws date to the visions of its founder?

In terms of credit, Labour leftists are partially right to claim the NHS we ended up with owes a great deal to Bevan. Although a Tory minister (Henry Willink) wrote the 1944 White Paper which many of the service's basic principles were based on, it was Bevan who decided to nationalise Britain's hospitals and to bring everything under central government control. Britain would have established some sort of national health system with or without a Labour government, but having a nationalised one was mostly them.

Having said that, the exact benefits of having opted for nationalised care are fairly questionable. Prior to nationalisation, British healthcare was provided by two kinds of institution — the charitable "voluntary hospitals" and "local authority hospitals" run by municipal councils. Both kinds of institutions had their flaws. With

voluntary hospitals raising money through paying patients or donations and municipal hospitals drawing on local taxes both quality and access to services varied a great deal from place to place. Whilst London, with its huge local tax base, was well served by a variety of well-funded municipal hospitals, in poorer parts of the country (particularly industrial areas) medical services were nearly impossible to get hold of.

Whilst nationalisation looked to address these health inequalities, the reality of State planning was that initial budgets were built on the foundations of older medical services and for the most part just reinforced them.

The early NHS was managed via appointed Regional Health Boards and Health Management Committees which the Labour government stacked with the only people they saw as qualified to run them — the old hospital administrators from the private sector, alongside the great and the good of both local politics and the medical profession. Health workers were soon complaining that nationalisation of the hospitals had simply installed a layer of Tory grandees to run the new system.

In many ways this new governance system was even less accessible to the public than the old one had been. Some pre-NHS private medical services like the Tredegar Medical Aid Society had been established on the basis of mutual aid, with senior figures elected by members of the society (the workers who paid its subscription fees). Citizens could also attempt to shape municipal medical services through local elections. In the new NHS, the local voice was largely marginalised, something that contributed to ongoing inequalities that the government never really looked to address until the mid-1970s.

Access to State funding and new medical advances certainly did improve health services in post-war Britain, just as rising living standards and improved nutrition increase life expectancy. However the opportunity to build a health service where

patients and community members had a real say was largely lost. For staff too, the NHS for the most part established a dictatorship of State and local elites. Reflecting his own, top-down and characteristically Labour, ideas about socialism, Bevan was explicit about excluding health workers from NHS decision-making, telling nurses in 1948 that no staff were to be represented on health boards or hospital management committees.

Technically true, Bevan was in fact misleading the nurses. Whilst nurses and other health workers like midwives and physiotherapists, as well as cleaners, caterers, porters and maintenance staff, were starved of influence in the new NHS, doctors (and some senior matrons) were amply represented on management boards, entrenching elite control of the service.

Although some hospitals established Joint Consultation Committees to facilitate worker influence over the running of their own workplaces, the Ministry of Health made no effort to promote them and cynical managers generally ignored them. By the 1960s only one hospital in ten had one, and workers complained that suggestions about improvements for staff were almost always ignored or delayed.

Like much of Labour's post-war settlement, the infant NHS was set up to entrench a state monopoly and therefore disenfranchised both the workforce and the wider community. Whilst the NHS made general improvements in healthcare in Britain, it established a pattern of central control which perpetuated inequalities from the old system that persist to this day in the "postcode lottery" of NHS services.

In excluding the workforce from a meaningful say in how their workplaces were run it laid the groundwork for the exploitation of its workforce, something reflected in the longstanding issues over pay and working conditions in the service. That exploitation and inequality is a vivid demonstration of the limits of the State socialism offered by even the most radical of Labour's traditions.



FREEDOM REPORT 2016

Welcome to this free edition of Freedom magazine, with added 2016 report!

This is the first full-size magazine the press has brought out in a while, following the closure of our monthly paid-for in 2014, and we thought we'd take the opportunity to tell you a bit about what we do and — for folks who already know about us — how we're doing.

It's been three-and-a-half years since Freedom was very nearly put out of commission by a "persons unknown" firebombing, but saved by a magnificent show of support from the wider anarchist movement.

In that time we've gone through a renovation project to fix up the damaged bits, welcomed new friends, gotten into new scrapes and finally, after many years of subsisting largely on comrades' kindness, are verging on self-sustaining.

But 2016 has also brought challenges, including a large bill for works needing doing to the building... **See pages 10-13**

ABOUT US

Freedom Press is an independent, non-sectarian, non-profit publishing house and bookshop collective dedicated to preserving and promoting anarchist ideas.

First established in 1886 by Charlotte Wilson as a voice for the anarchist tradition, Freedom has published more or less erratically ever since, making it the oldest such organisation in Britain, and possibly the English-speaking world.

Alongside our own extensive back catalogue of classic works we stock thousands of books, newspapers and pamphlets on everything from history to sex, philosophy to workers' struggles, fiction to anti-fascism, as well as the latest magazines, periodicals and newsletters from all the major anarchist and radical groups.

We published a newspaper until 2014, which was the oldest regular anarchist publication in Britain, and as per that original remit we maintain this free version along with a news and book selling website at freedompress.org.uk.

Since 1942 Freedom has operated out of Angel Alley in Whitechapel, taking ownership of 84b in 1962. This was later turned over to the Friends of Freedom, who hold the building in trust.

The Collective currently consists of three groups, Bookshop, Publishing and Media. It also participates in a fourth Building Group, which was set up to provide a consensus-led approach to building maintenance and bill payments in 2015 after a number of friendly organisations had moved into underused rooms.

PUBLISHING: ON THE UP

In 2015 we were in the process of reorganising the publishing group following the departure of Freedom's paid sub-editor from the collective, with minimal initial capital. We intended to:

- Set up a publishing-specific bank account to keep better track of the group's available funds
- Publish a new book for 2015, *Class Struggle and Mental Health*
- Publish a new book in 2016

After paying back an initial small loan, we aimed to utilise and expand on distribution sales to replace old works and fund new ones, while selling to the bookshop at cost to help its finances/pay for rates.

We are glad to say we have achieved or are on track to achieve all of these targets. The new bank account is operational, we funded and printed CS&MH, and we are pleased to present a longer book, *Why Work?* this year. The loan was paid back so publishing has no arrears, and distro income has raised enough that we are confident our next books will be paid for entirely out of existing group funds.

On top of the above, scanning has been undertaken of a number of older publications and essays, which gives



us the future option of doing quick turnarounds to bring these books back into the public eye.

Project summary: *Why Work?*

First published in 1983, the original version of *Why Work?* offered a provocative take on the status quo of work under capitalism and how we might want to change it.

It includes some classic writers (George Woodcock, Peter Kropotkin, and Bertrand

Russell) but was padded out with a large essay summarising current events in the 1970s and early '80s by former Freedom editor Vernon Richards, alongside several now largely obsolete Freedom editorials, plus letters and illustrations we couldn't verify copyright on.

So for the new edition we have been gathering essays from the 1990s, 2000s and '10s to encapsulate the astonishing changes which have taken place since he was writing. We've been very fortunate to pick up essays from the likes of Juliet Schor, Nina Power, Claire Woolfe and David Graeber to bring it up to date, along with the inclusion of other works by Colin Ward, Voltairine de Cleyre and prole.info.

Plans for the next year

At the time of writing we are in discussion on marketing and scheduling for *Why Work?* This is the first book under the new collective setup which has had the space for marketing, and we are only starting to learn this part of the trade. We hope to build up a bank of knowledge from this to make future releases more effective.

Depending on the success of *Why Work?* and ongoing income from Central/AK we are in discussion on whether to attempt two releases next year, with one Mayday and one Bookfair release mooted.

MEDIA: SLOW AND STEADY

With many other priority projects to deal with, including founding a fundraising group for the building, bringing out a new book and sorting out our distribution system after a period of slow going, the paper only appeared twice this year, as a freesheet which focused on housing and the fight for reproductive freedom in May and this issue for the Bookfair.

In between, articles were published at freedomnews.org.uk covering a range of issues from the rise of Corbynism and fighting institutional patriarchy to anti-

fascism and green issues.

The next project for the editors is a major revamp of the website to make it faster and more effective at producing news by and for the anarchist movement, as well as finding funds to keep the freesheet running without hitting other sections of the organisation.

We're on the lookout for people to contribute and help edit both the website and this free magazine, which we hope will have the reach that our old paid-for production lacked in its final two decades.

The printed issue is something which, as our incomes improve, we hope to put out as a regular quarterly with a decent page count and thoughtful writing.

There's both room for it in the movement, and a need for it as an outreach tool to reach that vast swathe of the population who don't come across anarchism in the course of reading their algorithmically-censored social media streams.

To get in touch and get involved in the project email editor@freedompress.org, uk, or call the shop on (07952) 157-742.

BOOKSHOP: TICKING OVER



The shop is the main hub for the building, picking up letters, hosting legal counsel sessions for activists, acting as the front door for other groups and new arrivals to London — plus selling books of course.

We currently have two part-time coordinators, who share responsibility for keeping the shop stocked, keeping an eye on its finances and organising volunteers.

As well as hosting booklaunches such as Friends of Freedom member Donald Room's new anthology of his Wildcat cartoon series, the shop has been the venue for regular building fundraising socials for the London movement, in prisoner support work and often acts as a place for groups to get together and organise at short notice.

Income for this year has been slightly up on previous, but looks to fall largely within the normal range of £24,000-30,000 which has been roughly steady since the bookshop moved to its downstairs space in 2008.

Once part-timers and volunteers have received daily expenses, and taking into account replacement of stocks, all surplus income goes towards things like paying the rates and utility bills, or helping to fund Freedom magazine.

As it stands, the bookshop is self-sustaining but not in a position to handle major economic shocks — a lean year can significantly throw out our finances and we have little in the way of cash reserves.

Current planning revolves around continuing to expand our offerings, increasing our pool of reliable volunteers (contact shop@freedompress.org.uk if you're interested), and of course increasing our sales count so we can put in more towards the renovations that need doing.

And short-term, if you're reading this at the Anarchist Bookfair then please do come down on November 5th for the launch of Richard Parry's new book on the insurrectionist Bonnot Gang, starting 3pm!

BUILDING: LOTS TO DO

There are many buildings we would like to see topple and fall over, but we would also like to think you share our view that Freedom is one worth keeping. To make sure that this happens, and the building at 84b Angel Alley remains a resource for all of the great anarchist groups to come, we're afraid to say that it's in need of some pretty serious repairs.

A survey carried out at the end of last year highlighted that emergency repairs are needed to the roof and walls that will total around £13,000 — more details can be found of this work on page 12. Our aim is to raise this figure by August 2017 so that the building works can take place next summer.

As of the beginning of October 2016, we've raised over £3,000 to get us started. And the fun doesn't stop there — over the coming three years we will need a

lot more money to treat dampness in the walls, insulate the building, install a boiler and look into making the whole place more accessible.

In the long term, costs could be between £40,000-50,000 to bring the building back to its best, including things like fixing up the lovely (but old-style) sash windows.

We would really like to take this opportunity to not only do the emergency repairs to keep it from falling apart, but to also push to make the space the best resource it can be for the wider London anarchist scene.

How can you help?

If you have some spare coins that you would like to donate to help us keep this resource you will find boxes to donate to on several stalls representing groups that form the Freedom Building Collective here at the

Anarchist Bookfair (Freedom, Corporate Watch, Haven, ASS, SolFed, AFed).

You can also donate via cheque, made payable to "Freedom Press" (see back page for mailing address), online via PayPal at www.paypal.me/fbuildingcollective (though they take a 3% slice of donations) or via direct bank transfer (call the shop for details).

Or if you have skills/time you would like to donate, drop us an email: freedombuilding@lists.aktivix.org.

Come along to one of our monthly socials held in the bookshop on the second Friday of every month, 7-9pm.

If you are organising benefit gigs you could consider adding us to your list of beneficiaries.

And you can help advertise the building and the fact we need money via social media — or even in real life.

THE BIG REBUILD FUND

YEAR 1

Following a survey done on the Freedom building at the end of last year, the Collective has been working out how to get a number of key major works done.

On this page we look at what the first tranche of works will need to be, how much it will cost, and how you can help us get there.

**FIX CHIMNEYS, ROOF FELT,
LEAD FLASHINGS £1,400**

**PARAPET REPAIRS
£600-1,500**

**UNBLOCK GUTTER
£200**

**SCAFFOLDING
£2,500(ISH)**

**BRICKWORK
REPOINTING
£5,000**

**ESTIMATE: £9,800-10,700 PLUS VAT
AT 20% AND £1,000 CONTINGENCIES**

TOTAL: £13,000

We'll also be blogging about the project
at freedombigrebuild.wordpress.com

DONATING

ONLINE

www.paypal.me/fbuildingcollective

CHEQUE

Payable to "Freedom Press," mail to
84b Whitechapel High st, London E1 QX

HELPING

EMAIL

freedombuilding@lists.aktivix.org

TELEPHONE

(07952) 157-742
and leave your details

UP NEXT...

Lower-priority works we'll need to do later include damp proofing (£2,000), staircase repair (£3,000), wall/ceiling repair, (£1,000), window repair, (£7,000), decoration (£5,000) and roof insulation (£1,000) — among other things.

EDITORIAL

It's hard to know where to start when writing an editorial about 2016. So much has happened in British politics that a summary piece could easily end up being just a list of uncommon events, from the rise of Corbynism and its impact on the libertarian left, to Brexit, the collapse of the Tory consensus and the quiet grind forward of the Pitchford Spy Cops inquiry.

Hillsborough, Iraq and many of the issues documented elsewhere in this magazine would all be worthy of comment in a "normal" year.

It's the first of these items however which has had the broadest impact on the anarchist movement, leaving us in a classic political bind as, after decades of right consensus, a social democratic party begins criticising neoliberalism, sweetened by a failed rightist coup, and makes promises of gains down the electoral road.

Yet what does Corbynism practically offer us as members of the 7.5-billion-strong "don't have a superyacht" club?

The optimistic answer might be that if Corbyn and co. win back permanent control of Labour from the right, if they then manage to bypass the mainstream media and win broad support that is so far lacking, if they take power and aren't then mangled by a combination of State, military and private interests, they might be able to implement at least some good old-fashioned nationalisation* along with investment in housing, protection of arts funding, an "integrated transport system**" and the like.

After 30 years of fighting losing battles; that sounds like a balm for the collective soul of the left, reversing the worst of the neoliberal long march by using the power of the State for good.

It's no wonder so many people are flocking to the likes of Momentum. It would be churlish to deny the draw of hope, or indeed write off such activity as useless — from such acorns movements can grow.

But we do know the limitations of social democracy. We've seen it again and again, not just in the past but now, in Greece and France and Venezuela and many other countries where the left has "gained power."

These governments, all of which benefit from a stronger grassroots left than Britain, have not, in the crux, been able to stand up to the weight of capital or the will of the markets. There's not much evidence that McDonnell's continuing of the Miliband-era "fiscal lock" will be able to break their mould in any but the most perfunctory of ways.

For many, that will be enough. A few bones is better than nothing, even if the ultimate failure of the social democratic left to make headway will likely result in a resurgent right-wing smirking "told you they couldn't protect you" as they ride to power on a wave of renewed petty nationalism.

But we know it's not enough. There is so much further to push, not just in straight policy terms but to rebuild the very bones of the progressive body. We can't exercise power in our workplaces through the goodwill of Corbyn. We can't push councils out of "fiscally responsible" budget cuts by waiting until 2020 and hoping McDonnell can nudge his cash-flow around a bit by 2025. All of that has to come from us, organising at the grassroots level, rekindling solidarity as a social norm.

Extra-parliamentary challenges change things where Jeremy Corbyn mouthing words at a honking chorus of Westminster goons does not.

Even as Freedom went to press, a vast groundswell of discontent in Poland from women facing a total State ban on abortion led to a humiliating U-turn by one of Europe's most right-wing administrations.

A vast international movement largely crushed neoliberal stitch-up trade deal TTIP this year despite the extreme efforts

of EU bureaucrats and politicians to bury even the basic details of what was happening on pain of prosecution.

And here in Britain Iain Duncan Smith's hated disability testing of people with chronic conditions has partially collapsed in the face of thousands upon thousands of legal challenges and protests amid public pressure and horror over the tortuous, sometimes lethal policy.

Direct action works. It's the only way to push further than timid reformism and "making the best of a bad deal." Even social democrats themselves realise this, though they try to bind such activities to their electoral yoke.

And anarchism's basic critiques of social democracy, even under nice-guy Corbyn, remain as relevant and trenchant as ever.

None of our movement's criticisms of Keynesianism, the State-led economic structures Corbyn and co. are attempting to rehash, have ceased to be true. Last time around our philosophy railed against its systemic inequalities, its inflexibility, its high-handedness, its ultimate use as a means to stabilise capital in times of crisis at the expense of the working classes.

Those priorities remain at the heart of a New-Old Labour project. The parliamentary left remains wedded to a rose-tinted vision of what the State is, what it's for, what it can achieve, in ways which ultimately just mirror the opposing dogmas of neoliberal rightists.

The flavour du jour is Corbynism, a rusting electric heater in the midst of a neoliberal winter night. We can — and must — do more to warm our cockles.

* An article of faith for the left, but the right were never wrong in noting the downsides of clunky, patronising, one-size-fits-all State planning. It's only their "improvements" which were inhuman.

** As a policy this was comprehensively skewered by a 1982 episode of *Yes Minister* called *Bed of Nails*.



ANARCHISM AND THE

The London Anarchist Bookfair is the longest-lasting public book event on the left in this country, regularly attracting around 3,000 people from this country and beyond to meet old friends, argue the toss at meetings and to buy and sell books. Other than the smaller regional book fairs — Bristol, Manchester, Sheffield for example — there are few places where anarchist books are seen. Few general bookshops are interested in anarchism and there are few radical bookshops.

That has not always been the case. At one time there were 130 radical bookshops in the UK with a public magazine, *The Radical Bookseller*. Some seemed predestined to fail: *Beautiful Stranger* in Rochdale and *Proletaria* in Doncaster, where are you now? Others have lived long and happy lives — *News from Nowhere* in Liverpool celebrated its 40th birthday a year or two back, while *Freedom Bookshop* and *Housmans* in London are even more venerable. All carry anarchist books and, own their own premises. That alone probably enabled them to survive when other radical bookshops were swept away.

There has always been a creative conflict between radical bookshops wanting to promote ideas and discussion and the necessity to pay the overheads and suppliers and, for those who go in that direction, paying the wages.

The anarchist 56a in south London and the Cowley Club in Brighton are run entirely by volunteers and are happy so doing. There are several such shops, which are also social spaces, in membership of the Alliance of Radical Booksellers (ARB). On the other hand *Housmans* and *Five Leaves*, in Nottingham, are the only two new-book booksellers in the country signed up to the Living Wage Foundation.

In the heyday of the radical trade many, if not most of the bookshops were anarchist-influenced or libertarian/feminist in their structure whilst selling a wide range of books. Operating as co-ops or collectives, they saw themselves as a prefigurative business model for how an alternative economy could work, together with collectively-run print shops, wholefood shops, community magazines and the like. *Mushroom Bookshop* in Nottingham

(where I worked from 1979-95) happily sported linked anarchist, feminist and peace signs on the shop van and was run as a collective. When I left, it was turning over £400,000 and paying better wages than commercial bookshops. Its politics at the time were strong, particularly over anti-fascism and opposition to wars, yet it ran commercially with a thriving school and library side to the business. One of the reasons the bookshop operated in this way was so that we were able to employ people with children and we did not expect workers to live in poverty in order to work there. This was also the view of *Silver Moon* feminist bookshop which operated for some time on Charing Cross Road in London (until rent hikes put them out of business when the government changed the rules to force councils to only charge market rents for premises).

The collective model was surprisingly controversial with, in 1985, *Comedia* publishing — *What a way to run a railroad*: an analysis of radical failure arguing, with supporting evidence, that collectively-run businesses were a bad thing. For some years the Federation of Alternative Booksellers refused entry to shops other than collectives, thus excluding *Housmans* and *Freedom* as well as shops owned by political groups of the left. This changed after some very fraught debates with the organisation becoming the Federation of Radical Booksellers. The current Alliance of Radical Booksellers has no such concerns.

Whatever the structure, radical bookshops have often come into conflict with the law and the far right. *Grassroots* in Manchester, *Silver Moon* and *Gays the Word* were among many shops which had LGBT stock seized. *Mushroom* and others had drug-related books taken. Muslim fundamentalists attacked the trade in general over *Satanic Verses* and in response *Bookmarks* produced a widely-circulated poster saying *Fight Racism, Not Rushdie*.

The far right were a constant threat — stickers, letter bombs, threatening phone-calls, physical attacks on staff — these were regular occurrences. These included, for example, firebomb attacks in 1973 and 1977 on two Black bookshops in London, both called *Unity Bookshop*, and in 1994

an attack by fifty fascists on *Mushroom* in Nottingham. The more recent attempted arson attack on *Freedom Bookshop* is likely also to have come from the right. But really, every radical bookshop was a target, *Fourth Idea* in Bradford, *Gays the Word* in London... everyone had their story to tell.

But to prove there is nothing new under sun, Christopher Richardson, in his book *A City of Light: Socialism, Chartism and Co-operation* — Nottingham 1844 describes how in 1826 the local freethought bookshop was besieged by Christians for four weeks before the owner, one Mrs Susannah Wright won the day. During the siege she had to draw a pistol on two of her assailants!

Radical bookshops have a long history, their names often appearing fleetingly in the records. Anarchist bookshops from the past include a succession of shops run by the IWW supporter Charles Lahr and a number of short-lived anarchist bookshops often described as “*The Bomb Shop!*” *Leicester*, for a period, had *The Black Flag* bookshop, *Leamington* had *The Other Branch* and the 121 centre on *Railton Road* in *Brixton* had a bookshop for about ten years, though the opening hours were admitted to be erratic. Much better known was *Rising Free*, latterly of *Upper Street* in *Islington*.

There is a persistent rumour that they sourced their stock (being polite here) from other bookshops. True or not, they helped me into radical bookselling by supplying books for a college stall on sale or return back in the early 1970s in *Aberdeen* before *Boomtown Books* opened. I’ve probably got some remaining stock from the bookstall if you want it... A longer lasting libertarian outlet was the commercially-owned *Compendium* in *Camden* which linked the hippy era of *Better Books* and *Indica* (in *London*), *Unicorn* (*Brighton*) and *Ultima Thule* (*Newcastle*) with the more political era in the wake of 1968. It closed in 2000, still profitable, when the lure of renting out the premises was too strong for its owners to resist. *Compendium* was famed — in those pre-internet days — for its American imports, and by publishers for its slowness in paying bills.

BOOKSHOP TRADE

Though the London Anarchist Bookfair continues, others such as the annual Socialist Bookfair, the Feminist Book Fortnight the International Book Fair of Radical Black and Third World Book ran out of steam. The radical trade was also a significant part of Booksellers Action for Nuclear Disarmament.

It was always my dream (not that I did much to bring it about) that there would be a closer alliance of radical bookshops, radical people who worked in mainstream bookselling, radical publishers, radical writers and radical librarians.

All the groups mentioned did this for a period, but nothing permanent developed. Not all former staff of radical bookshops stayed on the outside left — Days of Hope in Newcastle (known locally as Haze of Dope) included Mo Mowlam and Alan Milburn who both went on to be Labour cabinet ministers but most bookshop staff are still around and often still have an involvement in the book trade.

In some ways, despite the number of shops being low nowadays, anarchist books are more available than ever, thanks to the internet but also the major operations (by left wing standards) AK Distribution and Active Distribution, both of whom have huge stalls at the Anarchist Bookfair but also at festivals and other suitable events. Both have an extensive mail order operation.

There are also a number of second hand book dealers selling anarchist books. The best of them is probably Northern Herald books, owned by the anarchist Bob Jones. Their stall is always the busiest at the bookfair and you can find them at many conferences of the cooperative and trade union movement. Frustratingly Northern Herald has resisted putting its stock online but they have never failed to have the book I wanted in stock.

The number of bookshops in the Alliance is steadily growing. Some are glorified bookstalls, some are second hand, some are social spaces, some — I am thinking of the socialist People's Bookshop in Durham — are central to the local labour movement. The London Radical Bookfair, an initiative of the ARB, complements the Anarchist Bookfair (and includes some of the same exhibitors) and has found a supportive venue at Goldsmiths in South London. The LRB will have its fifth year next year.

The Alliance also has set up the Bread and Roses Award for Radical Publishing and the Little Rebels award for children's books. Having been initially funded by Five Leaves, the current sponsor is the General Federation of Trade Unions. There is more confidence in radical bookselling now than for some time and some effort has been put into creating this skeletal structure for the movement. A lot of that is down to Housmans, which has put itself at the centre of the radical bookselling revival.

Not that it is easy to run a radical bookshop... city centre rents are prohibitive. Five Leaves survives in its city centre spot because we are in an alleyway whose only other tenant is a bookies, but this also means we are unlikely to be swept away by rent hikes. Trade discounts are better than they used to be and publishers large and small are keen to support independent bookshops. Britain's publishers are very dependent on the one chain, Waterstones. Even though the number of independent bookshops fell below 1,000 for the first time in 2013 our collective contribution to the book trade is more than the sum of its parts and it is in every publisher's interest that the indie sector survives.

It used to be said that the only way to make a small fortune in bookselling is to start with a large fortune... certainly

nobody expects to get rich in this business. Not least because unlike, say, a cafe, bookshops need to carry a lot of stock to be attractive and it probably takes about three years to find your feet economically.

From almost the start Five Leaves has paid the Living Wage (not the government's renamed pretend minimum wage the "national living wage"). That's not been easy and we have to be fairly ruthless at business decisions to manage it. Whilst I have nothing against shops being entirely run by volunteers, I felt that I could not expect people to work for the business for less per hour than the cost of a standard paperback novel.

It's also a good selling point as to why people should shop with us — we pay our staff properly. This has a resonance with many customers but particularly trade unionists. Our own annual mini-festival (Bread and Roses) is trade union sponsored and we regularly work with unions such as Unison, NUT and the former NUM on meetings and projects.

Five Leaves also has a big events programme, weekly events in the shop, political talks, poetry readings, Irish history, transgender, anarchism, Middle East, Corbynism; you name it, we've had talks on it. Often these are in conjunction with outside groups.

The talks — not all book-related — being people in and make the bookshop a significant part of the local political and literary scene. These complement our main job, which is, and always will be, offering books for sale as radical bookshops have been doing in Nottingham since 1826!

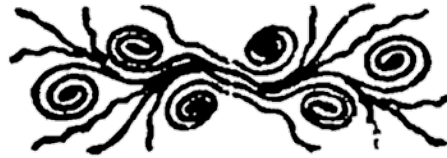
Ross Bradshaw

Ross set up Five Leaves Bookshop in Nottingham in 2013, which grew out of Five Leaves Publications, which has been publishing since 1995.



ANARCHY IN HARINGEY

BRIEF HISTORY OF A LONDON BOROUGH



I guess Tottenham is most known for its riots in 1985 and 2011. These were in no way organised or led by anarchists, and we were a very small part of them. But, they definitely showed the anger sections of the local community had toward the killing of members of their community by the police. This anger was also evident on the streets of Haringey when Joy Gardner and Roger Sylvester were also killed by the state. Local anarchists have always tried to stand side-by-side with those more directly affected.

But disquiet goes back a long way in Tottenham. In 1909 two alleged anarchists held up a payroll followed by a two-hour gun battle with the local police. Maybe not our most positive moment but still part of our local history. For more details, check out "Tottenham Outrage."

Tottenham and anarchism probably go back a lot further but this is a quick and brief history of the last 30 or so years.

The early '80s saw three different anarchist newspapers in Haringey. In 1984/5 there was the aptly named Soci@list Opportunist which lasted for six issues. Then there was Haringey Anarchist News in 1986 followed by Haringey Free in 1987/8.

During this time the Trades Union Centre in Brabant Road was used for gigs and meetings and although not directly anarchist there was a local bookshop that stocked a number of anarchist books and magazines (Reading Matters).

The Unwaged Centre on West Green Road then became the hub of the anarchist and anti-authoritarian movement in the borough with many groups such as the Claimants Union, Haringey Short Life Users Group (collection of short life housing co-ops), Haringey Women's Group and others involved. Squatting of homes and factories for living and parties has always

had a strong tradition in Haringey from at least the early '80s.

In the late '80s local anarchists and friends formed the local Anti Poll Tax group. A small Labour Party-inspired group also existed but soon disappeared as they wouldn't support non-payment, leaving Tottenham Against the Poll Tax as the only show in town. Similar groups set up in different parts of Haringey and at its height five area groups worked together in a federated structure alongside a number of street level groups. Although anarchist-influenced, these groups were broad based and made up of annoyed local residents and workers. For a more detailed account go to radicalhistorynetwork.blogspot.co.uk/2009/10/how-residents-defeated-poll-tax-in.html

Haringey anarchists were also involved with setting up the national autonomous group 3D (Don't Register, Don't Pay, Don't Collect) and the Trafalgar Square Defendants' Campaign.

With the Poll Tax beaten, the local groups stayed together, changed their names and became local "Solidarity Groups."

Initially starting with Tottenham Solidarity Group, other groups soon formed into Solidarity Groups later coming together as one single group Haringey Solidarity Group (HSG). Again not specifically anarchist, these groups tried to be as open as possible and were more concerned with having local people involved than pushing a single line. Although for 25 years HSG has always kept the principles that they are not connected to any political group or party and "our aim is to promote solidarity, mutual aid and link working class struggles. We can't rely on politicians or leaders to do things for us".

Throughout HSG has had three main strands to its activities. To start local

campaigns and link up with similar campaigns nationally; to support groups or individuals within Haringey; to help similar groups set up in London (and sometimes further afield).

There are too many campaigns HSG have been involved in over the years to mention them all. Likewise, for the number of groups and individuals we have acting in solidarity with. For any historians out there all the leaflets, posters and newsletters produced are available. From the early '80s a number of issues have always been important including housing/squatting, worker's solidarity, anti fascism, claimant support and others.

Like our comrades from the '80s we still believe in propaganda. HSG have distributed a local newsletter since 1992 (Tottenham Community Action then Totally Indpendant).

These have always been given out free on the streets of Haringey and at its height 12,000 copies were distributed four times a year. HSG have probably given out hundreds of thousands of leaflets on a huge and diverse range of subjects. And as all good anarchists should, tens to hundreds of posters have magically appeared on bus stops, billboards and walls regularly.

Haringey Solidarity Group will, as always, have a stall at this year's London Anarchist Bookfair. Hunt us out especially if you live locally. Otherwise check out the website at: www.haringey.org.uk.

For another view of local anarchist activities over the past 30 years check out: katesharpleylibrary.net/cvdp18. The booklet "The Poll Tax Rebellion in Haringey" is still available from HSG.

Tony Wood

Haringey Solidarity Group and London Anarchist Bookfair collective member

SURVIVING THE COP SHOP

CN: Mental health and self-harm

There are downsides and upsides to informing the police of a mental health condition. Being in a cell is a shitty experience and if you feel unsafe you may have no choice but to tell someone. On the other hand, it is not likely that your time in custody will be significantly shortened if you do inform the police that you have a mental health issue. Some people find it easier to keep their heads down and just try and get through it. Custody suites are inherently oppressive and hostile environments and people cope with them in different ways.

You have the right to see a medic while you are in custody. He/she will be able to check you over and record any injuries you might have received, as well as discussing your mental state. If you have medication with you you'll probably be allowed to take it. Keep in mind that the medic will be a police employee and so they will inform the custody sergeant about anything you tell them.

A general rule that legal support groups push heavily is “no comment.” When you are booked in at the custody desk the sergeant will run through some standard questions, including questions on mental health and self-harm. If you say “no comment” these questions you will be treated as if you had answered yes. This means you will be subject to more intensive monitoring. Which is something that could make your stay in custody a much worse experience.

Your answers to questions are also recorded on your custody record and will remain on a police database. That means you'll be treated as having a history of mental health problems in any subsequent arrests and you will likely receive the same intensive monitoring regardless of how you answer the question.

If the police do know that you have a mental health condition they may insist on your being interviewed with an appropriate adult, which would almost certainly extend your time in a cell.



Additionally if you admit to a history of self-harm you may be subjected to a strip search and be forced to wear a paper suit.

If you do self-harm or have an episode in custody make sure it's recorded on your custody record by the medic as this could be grounds to win an aggravated damages case if you ever have the opportunity to sue the police after your arrest. It may take a while so keep the pressure up.

When you are released from custody photograph any injuries you may have as soon as possible and document how you were treated, in a witness statement. This can be used to take action against the police at a later date.

There are steps you can take to distract yourself from the situation and can help if you feel like the situation is getting too much. You are entitled to a copy of PACE (Police and Criminal Evidence Act) — the guidelines the police have to follow whilst holding you, as well as a religious text. Additionally if you have a book with you it may be possible to read it in your cell. There is not much to do while in custody, so reading can help a lot, even to alleviate the inevitable boredom.

You also have the right to have someone informed of your arrest. You can ask to

take a number from your mobile phone but make sure that you have some written down separately if you don't want to be checking your phone in front of the cops. It is a good idea to contact the Green and Black Cross helpline as they will be able to record your arrest as well as arrange for people to support you outside the police station.

Being arrested is a traumatic and dangerous experience. It can take time to deal with what you went through and that's okay. It's fine to take time off from politics or frontline actions. Less intensive activities that don't have the same danger of arrest (like legal support, prisoner support) are equally valid and important. Be around people who won't think less of you for taking a break.

There are lots of resources to read that deal with mental health, burnout and state inflicted trauma check out these groups and articles as a jumping off point:

- theicarusproject.net
- counsellingforsocialchange.org.uk/activists
- libcom.org/library/07-advice-radical-mental-health-professionals
- emptycagesdesign.org/category/radical-community-organising/overcoming-burnout/



WHO'S WHO AND WHERE



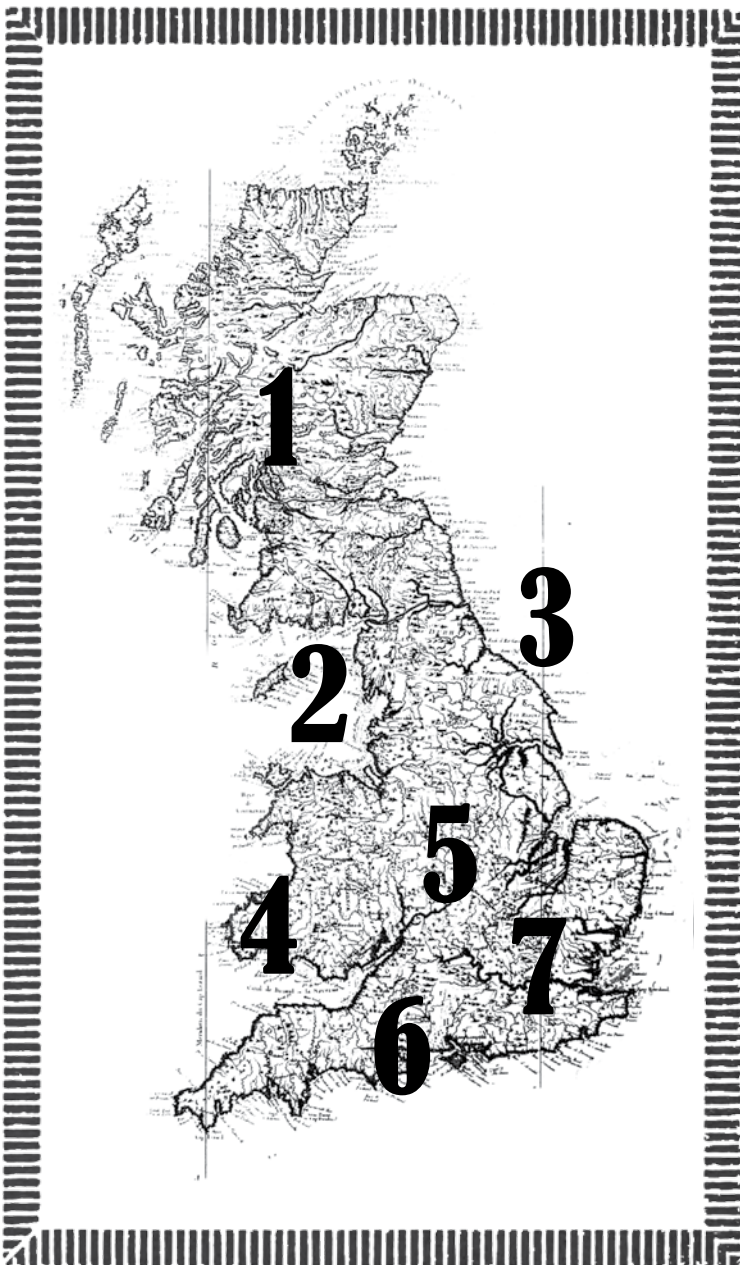
A HAPHAZARD LIST OF FRIENDLY BRITISH GROUPS

PLACES

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1 SCOTLAND
ACE (Edinburgh)
Calton Books
(Glasgow)</p> | <p>6 SOUTH
Cowley Club
(Brighton)
Hydra Books (Bristol)
Kebele (Bristol)
October Books
(Southampton)</p> |
| <p>2 NORTH-WEST
News from
Nowhere
(Liverpool)
Partisan
(Manchester)</p> | <p>7 LONDON
56a Infoshop (SE17)
Black Cat Cafe (E5)
Common House (E2)
DIY Space for London
(SE15)
Feminist Library (SE1)
Freedom Bookshop
(E1)
Housmans Bookshop
(N1)
London Action
Resource Centre (E1)
Mayday Rooms (EC4)</p> |
| <p>3 NORTH-EAST
1 in 12 Club
(Bradford)
People's Bookshop
(Durham)
Margins [opens in
2017] (Sunderland)
Star & Shadow
Cinema (Newcastle)
Wharf Chambers
(Leeds)</p> | <p>OTHER LOCAL FOLKS
Bristol Radical History
Radical Glasgow
Haringey Solidarity
Group
Housing Action
Southwark & Lambeth
London Coalition
Against Poverty</p> |
| <p>4 WALES
South Wales
Anarchists</p> | |
| <p>5 MIDLANDS
Five Leaves
Sumac Centre
(Nottingham)</p> | |



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RADICAL ROUTES CO-OPS

- | | |
|--|---|
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|--|---|

SOLIDARITY

Angola 3 Campaign
 Anti Fascist Network
 Bargee Travellers Association
 Black Lives Matter
 Boycott Workfare
 Calais Migrant Solidarity
 Disabled People Against Cuts
 Fuel Poverty Action
 Hunt Saboteurs Association
 No Borders
 Peace in Kurdistan Campaign
 Shut Down Yarl's Wood
 Travellers Solidarity Network
 UK Zapatista Solidarity

'justice'

Anarchist Black Cross
 Campaign Opposing Police Surveillance
 Empty Cages Collective
 Green and Black Cross
 Fitwatch
 Legal Defence & Monitoring Group
 Netpol
 Police Spies Out of Lives

GREEN

Breaking The Frame	Plane Stupid
Coal Action Network	Reclaim The Power
Earth First!	Rising Tide
Frack off	Seeds for Change
Just Seeds	Social Ecology London

SUPPORT

Advisory Service for Squatters
 Anti Raids Network (helping migrants)
 hacktionlab.org (tech for activists)
 Haven Distribution (books to prisoners)
 Radical Routes (housing co-ops)
 Riseup.net (email lists for radicals)
 SQUASH campaign (squatter support)
 Veggies Catering Campaign

media

- Active Distribution
- AK Distribution
- Aktivix
- Anarchist Studies
- Anarchist Voices
- Anti Capitalist Art
- Aufheben
- Autonomedia/Minor Compositions
- Brave Heart Distro
- Christiebooks
- Corporate Watch
- Dissident Island Radio
- Endnotes
- Entartete Kunst
- Elephant Editions
- Five Leaves
- Footprint printers
- Godhaven Ink
- Insurrection News
- Kate Sharpley Library
- Libcom
- PM Press
- Lib Ed
- Minor Compositions
- Network 23
- Now or Never
- Occupied Times
- Past Tense
- PM Press
- Princesa Pirata Distro
- The Print Project
- Propagate collective
- Rabble
- Radish Books
- Reel News
- South Essex Heckler
- Sparrows' Nest Library
- Strike Magazine
- Tech Tools for Activism
- Wolf Press

feminism

Feminist Fightback	Sisters Uncut
Focus E15	Southall Black Sisters
Shut the Ripper Museum	Speaking of Imelda

work

Angry Workers
 IWW

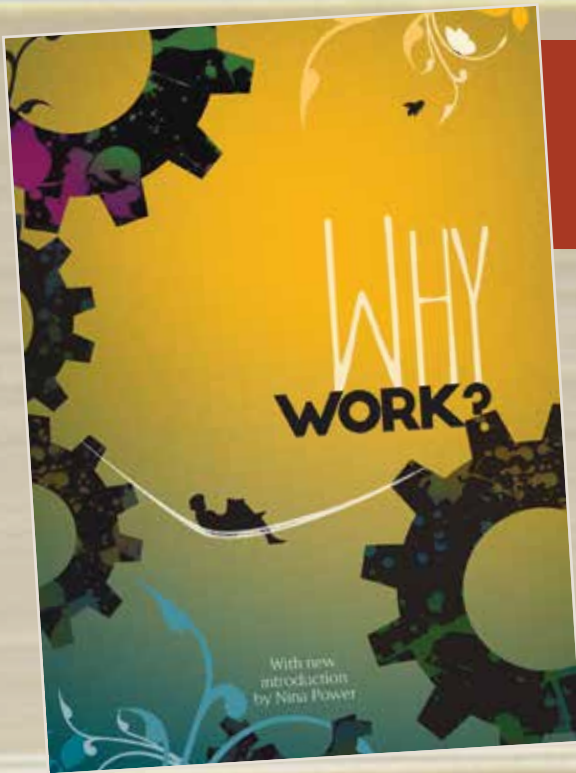
peace

Bristol Against the Arms Trade
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National

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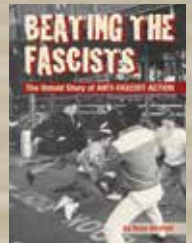
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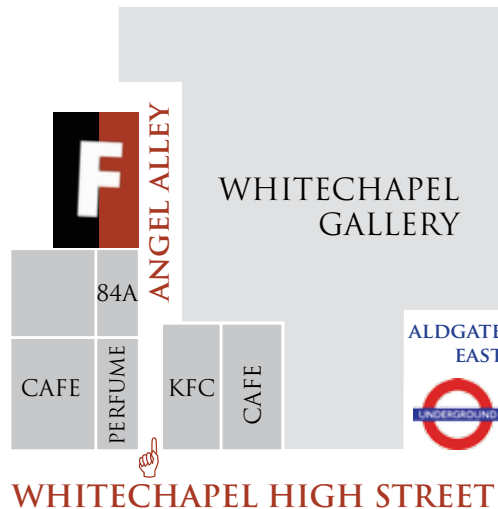
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